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SIPDIS

CENTCOM AND EUCOM: PLEASE PASS TO POLAD AND J-5

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TAGS: PGOV PREL ECON TU

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION CHP VIEWS ON IRAQ: DON'T COUNT ON US

REF: A. 02 ANKARA 9132  
B. ANKARA 0549

(U) Classified by Polcouns John Kunstadter; reasons: 1.5  
(b)(d)

**¶11. (C)** From Jan. 11 through 27, we canvassed half a dozen senior officials and M.P.s from the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) on Iraq. As the party of Ataturk and standard bearer of the Establishment, CHP reflects a Kemalist line on domestic and foreign policy matters. CHP views on Iraq mirror those staked out publicly and privately by CHP leader Deniz Baykal (ref A).

-- While professing their distaste for Saddam, CHPers oppose a war in Iraq and want an undefined "peaceful solution" to the crisis.

-- CHP has no real policy of its own for the region, and is waiting for the AK Party/Government to commit itself on Iraq before launching its own political counteroffensive. According to CHP M.P. and former Interior Minister Hasan Fehmi Gunes, as of Jan. 16, there had been absolutely no formal discussion about Iraq at any level of the party hierarchy. CHP M.P. Mesut Deger told us Jan. 27 -- four days before the key end-of-the-month National Security Council (NSC) meeting -- that the party had finally accepted the need to begin seriously considering the situation.

-- CHPers -- from Vice Chairman Esref Erdem to Foreign Relations Committee member Emin Koc -- tell us that they will not back the deployment or transiting of US troops through Turkey if/when the matter comes before Parliament for a vote, and that the USG should keep this in mind when making policy.

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Comment: "It's the State, Stupid"  
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**¶12. (C)** CHP's views partly reflect the concerns about negative public opinion shared by the ruling AK Party. They also echo the anxieties of a Kemalist State apparatus habitually suspicious about USG activities in the region -- as evidenced in part by leaks to the press last week alleging USG-PKK cooperation against Turkey (ref B). One CHP official suggested to us Jan. 27 that, regardless of how Turkey's Iraq policy eventually plays out, the State Establishment -- distinct from and superior to the elected government -- will be the ultimate arbiter. "The USG," he asserted with some vigor, "needs to understand that it is the State, not the AK Government, that is important right now."

PEARSON